

**A Message from Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH,  
Director of Public Health and Health Officer**

By the end of this week, H1N1 vaccinations will be available to Los Angeles County residents through many doctors and Public Health vaccine clinics.

Though the vaccine will be available to everyone, it will first be targeted to specific priority groups who are at the greatest risk to contract the flu, spread it, and suffer serious complications. These groups are:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for infants under six months of age
- Healthcare and emergency services personnel
- People aged six months through 24 years of age
- People aged 25 through 64 years of age who have health conditions that put them at higher risk for flu-related complications.

We encourage residents to receive the vaccine from their usual healthcare providers, if possible. About 3,000 healthcare providers countywide have ordered the vaccine, the first large shipments of which are expected to reach them for distribution over the next two weeks.

By early November, the H1N1 vaccine should also be available at pharmacies throughout the county.

Starting on Oct. 23, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health will host free H1N1 vaccination clinics targeted to county residents in the priority groups who do not have a primary health care provider or cannot afford to purchase the vaccine from a pharmacy. The vaccine will be available as either a nasal spray or injection. The schedule and locations of the public clinics will be listed on the Public Health website two weeks at a time, so check back frequently to find a convenient clinic.

The H1N1 vaccine has an excellent safety profile. It does not cause the flu. It is the best tool we have to protect you and your loved ones, and to fight the spread of flu through our community. The other effective ways to protect yourself and others are simple healthy habits such as washing your hands, covering your cough, and staying home from school or work if you get sick.

And though it is important to take steps to protect your health this flu season, I'd like to caution you against purchasing unapproved or illegal "remedies" for H1N1 online. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently issued a [statement](#)\* warning that several products represented online as the antiviral medication Tamiflu were either counterfeit or not approved for use in the United States, and could pose health risks for users.

As the FDA advises, use extreme care when purchasing any medication online. Antiviral drugs should only be taken in consultation with and as prescribed by your doctor. As I've shared with you before, most cases of H1N1 are mild to moderate in severity, and can be

treated by staying home, getting plenty of rest, drinking plenty of fluids and treating fever and aches and pains with over-the-counter medication, such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or naproxen (but not aspirin). Ask your doctor if you should take an antiviral prescription drug.

You should also seek medical attention for the flu if you experience any of the following symptoms:

For children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids or stopping urinating
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that a child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms that improve, but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

For adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Keep visiting Public Health's website for frequently updated information, and please visit [our YouTube page](#)\*\* as well to see videos about H1N1 and other Public Health topics.

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\* <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm186861.htm>

\*\* <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>